

Saturday, June 23, 12
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[Coleman, "Missiles of November, December..." 2007, p. 17]

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Dennison CINCLANT then proposed that tactical nuclear weapons be available to invasion forces, to be used only in retaliation. JCS and McN allowed him to equip the invasion force with nuclear-capable delivery systems such as Honest John missiles and eight-inch howitzers: but not warheads without explicit JCS approval. (Plus prepositioning of some tactical missiles without warheads.) William Y Smith said in 1992 that request was turned down “because there no evidence any [Soviet] nuclear weapons were there.” Coleman 22.

By 10 November, US surveillance had counted 33 MRBM transporters on eight ships heading back, and the admin “had decided to take Soviet leaders at their word that they had deployed a total of 42 MRBMs in Cuba and that all the missiles had been removed.” Coleman 23.

[How many had been seen by Oct. 28? Coleman said US intell had photos of only 33 MRBMs in Cuba. So if they had attacked...]

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{! So, he didn’t feel he had given that: without ground UN inspection? And didn’t want to!} But without that, SU wouldn’t take out ground troops; so JFK preferred them to keep (some) ground troops. “Better off to have those units in and not have the guarantee.” Coleman 27

[So, he may not have intended to invade, but wanted to keep the threat, as pressure on Castro, and as protection against the domestic charge that he had taken the pressure off Castro! “told the enemy what we will or won’t do; we must keep him guessing.”)]

Bundy agrees: the Lunas were “not that important” and that a formal guarantee about Cuba “would be a bargaining point that we don’t buy.” JFK: “That’s what I think. I think we’re all in agreement that we would much rather have all this stuff there, SAM sites, FROGs and all the rest, than to be really locked in anykind of a guarantee that would be difficult to get out of.” [!!]

Max state of readiness for invasion reached on Nov. 15. (JCS had continued to plan) They were concerned about short-range missiles near Guantanamo; they didn't know these were nuclear-armed FKRs. They also saw Lunas as a threat to Guantanamo (without knowing they were nuclear-armed).

K was claiming that all nuclear warheads were gone from Cuba, well before they actually were: Nov. 12, 13, 15, 18 November (Kuznetsov), Nov. 20, K to JFK: **All lies**. [Compare these lies to American acceptance of SU assurance that all MRBMs had been removed!]

Tactical nuclear warheads did not leave until December. Pliev did not get order to return all the warheads until 29 November: A policy reversal. Original plan to hand over the Luna rockets to the Cubans (with Soviet control of warheads); likewise FKR's. No decision had been made in early November on whether warheads would remain.

"The factor that apparently changed K's mind was Castro's seemingly erratic behavior in late October through mid-November." 29

Castro was furious at the removal of the MRBMs without consulting him. [No one comments that there is some oddity in this, since Castro claimed that he had accepted the MRBMs only for strategic reasons for the SU, not for the defense of Cuba. It was the tac nucs that were relevant to defense, and those were intended to remain, as of end-October.

Mikoyan told K that Castro's famed revolutionary passion was becoming worryingly apocalyptic. Mikoyan had tried to reassure the Cuba leader that Moscow would provide the means for Cuba to defend itself [presumably this refers to the tac nucs!] but would not embark on nuclear war with the US. [Does that mean, Moscow thought that a use of tac nucs by Cuba would not escalate to nuc war between the US and SU? Possible, but not likely. Tac nucs were a very good deterrent: not a way of prevailing in a limited conflict.] Castro's response was combative: "Cuba cannot be conquered, it can only be destroyed." [WHY NOT rely on plans for guerrilla war? NOT possible if tac nucs were used!]

"When K learned on Nov. 15 that Castro had issued orders to shoot down US surveillance planes [see Oct. 27!], he made the decision to bring all the tactical nuclear warheads back to the Soviet Union...The instructions were sent to Pliev five days later." Coleman 30. *Nov 20? or Nov 29?*

"Unaware of this order, the Cubans remained hopeful that the island's defense still included a nuclear dimension." Paul Roa sent message to UN rep on Nov. 20 "we still have tactical atomic weapons, which must be kept."

Che Guevara interview on Nov. 28, "boasted that not only would Cubans fight to the end if the US attacked, but 'if the rockets had remained, we would have used them all and directed them against the very heart of the US including New York.'"
 [as if Cubans controlled the weapons. In 1992, Castro claimed that he had known about the Luna nuclear warheads in Cuba and had been confident that they would be used. " [In which case, "to the end" would come a lot sooner than if they resisted with guerrilla war!]

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[But none advocated an attack on Cuba. Just complained (Nixon) that JFK had allowed a "Soviet beachhead" in Cuba. But the fact that this didn't get up a head of steam for attacking or invading or even "demanding" that Soviet troops and equipment leave suggests that K could have gotten away with a "base" earlier, in the fall, if he hadn't sent MRBMs but had sent tac nucs (which weren't even seen, FKR's; and Lunas were accepted, though "nuc-capable" like Migs) for defense.]

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